



Many cancers could be prevented across the globe

The World Cancer Research Fund global network has launched its new Policy Report, *Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention*, which sets out changes that can be made at all levels of society to help prevent cancer. New analysis undertaken for this Policy Report shows that following healthy patterns of diet and physical activity similar to those set out in the WCRF/AICR Second Expert Report *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective* (2007) has the potential to prevent about one third of the most common cancers.

The Second Expert Report includes public health goals and recommendations for personal choices for cancer prevention. However, setting these targets is only the first step. The comprehensive public health goals need to be turned into policies and actions at all levels, from global and national to municipal and local.

Who is this new Policy Report for?

Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention looks at the environmental, economic and social factors that affect people's choices and how these influence cancer development. It provides sets of recommendations for different "actor groups" – i.e., specific sectors of society whose action can influence behaviour, and in turn, the incidence of cancer, and explains the rationale behind the recommendation. Each recommendation does not stand-alone. They all depend on some extent of action being taken elsewhere. The greatest benefit will come from coordinated and integrated action by all actors, including:

- Multinational bodies
- Civil society organisations
- Government
- Industry
- Media
- Schools
- Workplaces and institutions
- Health and other professionals
- People

The preventability of cancer

Cessation of smoking alone can reduce cancer incidence by one-third. Maintaining appropriate diets, healthy body weight, and sustained physical activity, can prevent 30 – 40 per cent of cancers. The Policy Report contains new cancer preventability estimates, i.e., the proportion of cancer cases that can be prevented by eating healthily, being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight.

Estimates of cancer preventability were made based on the conclusions of the Second Expert Report. These estimates confirm that both in developed countries, such as the US and the UK, and in developing countries such as Brazil and China, healthy diet and lifestyle patterns - as recommended in the Second Expert Report - could prevent a substantial proportion of all cases of cancer.

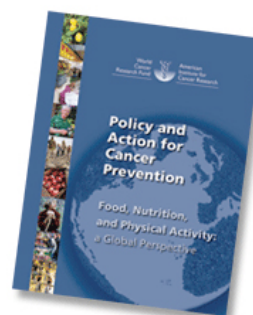
Estimated percentage of cancers that could be prevented:

Cancer Site	US	UK	Brazil	China
Mouth, pharynx, larynx	63	69	63	44
Oesophagus	69	75	60	44
Lung	36	33	36	38
Stomach	47	45	41	33
Pancreas	39	41	34	14
Gall bladder	21	16	10	6
Bowel	15	17	6	6
Liver	45	43	37	17
Breast	38	42	28	20
Endometrium	70	56	52	34
Prostate	11	20	N/A*	N/A*
Kidney	24	19	13	8
12 cancer combined	34	39	30	27

* Exposure data not available

The estimates for China are lower than the estimates for developed countries such as the UK and the US, but still almost half a million cancer deaths could be prevented in China every year.

In terms of lifestyle, Hong Kong lies between China and US/UK. The proportion of HK population who are overweight is similar to that of China, but on average, HK people eat less vegetable and are less physically active. Thus, it was estimated that about a third of the most common cancers in HK might be prevented through healthy patterns of diet, physical activity and weight management.



To learn more about the WCRF/AICR Policy Report, *Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention*, please visit www.wcrf-hk.org

WCRF/AICR Policy Recommendations for Health Professionals and Other Stakeholders

Health professionals have unrivalled opportunities to provide information and encouragement to support healthy ways of life, and therefore have a direct and obvious influence on people's health.

All professionals should be aware of the vital importance of public health within any society, and accept their responsibility to protect and promote public health.

In order to conduct professional practice to realise the potential for promoting health including cancer prevention, the WCRF/AICR Policy Report, *Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention*¹, has set the following recommendations for health professionals:

- Incorporate public health impact, including prevention of cancer in core professional training and continuing development
- Collaborate with other disciplines in order to advance knowledge and understanding of the potential to promote public health, including cancer prevention
- Make protection of public health including prevention of cancer a priority in core training, practice and continuing development
- Take a lead in educating, informing and collaborating with colleagues, other professionals, and other actor groups to improve and maintain public health, including the prevention of cancer
- Involve people actively as family and community members in professional practice

To know more about the rationale behind the Policy Recommendations or to download a copy of the Policy Report, please visit our Policy Report website at www.dietandcancerreport.org/pr

Reference:

1. World Cancer Research Fund / American Institute for Cancer Research. *Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention: Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective*. 2009 (<http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/pr>)

Editor's note

To keep you informed on the latest research on cancer prevention and WCRF HK's activities such as our Health Professional Conference and Research Grant Programme, we need to keep your contact information updated.

Please fill in your contact details in the enclosed form and send the completed form to Ms. Patricia Chiu by fax at (852) 2520 5202 or by emailing p.chiu@wcrf.org

Informed newsletter is also available in digital version. We strongly encourage the use of digital *Informed* to help save resources and our Earth. Please kindly include your email address in the contact update form.

Who is responsible?

Let's look at a recent study about television viewing time and food habits in adolescence to get a better understanding of who can play a role in health promotion in relation to cancer prevention.¹

This longitudinal study found that long TV viewing time (>5hours/d) is predictive of high junk food and low wholesome food consumption 5 years later. Moreover, poor dietary habits were associated with long TV viewing time in 2000 adolescents in the US. The authors also believed food advertisements targeted towards children can have a tremendous impact on their food choices – especially true when viewing TV and consuming excessive junk food subconsciously.

This study prompts us to reflect on how the media, parents, schools, the food industry, government and health professionals can all play a role in providing a healthy environment. For example, while parents can limit TV viewing time, government can impose proper regulations on food advertisements to help our younger generation live more healthily. To know more about how each actor group can make a difference in public health, please refer to the newly launched WCRF/AICR Policy Report, *Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention*.²

Reference:

1. Barr-Anderson DJ et al. Does television viewing predict dietary intake five years later in high school students and young adults? *International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity* 2009; 6:7.
2. World Cancer Research Fund / American Institute for Cancer Research. *Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention: Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective*. 2009 (<http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/pr>)

Check List

Please circulate this newsletter to other colleagues in order to help us spread the good news that cancer is largely preventable.

***Informed* is available free of charge to all healthcare professionals.**

How to join the mailing list

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Newsletter copy review

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World Cancer Research Fund Hong Kong (WCRF HK)

Rm 601, On Hong Commercial Bldg, 145 Hennessy Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.
Tel: (852) 2529 5025 Fax: (852) 2520 5202
Web: www.wcrf-hk.org
Registered Charity No: 596724
WCRF HK is a member of the WCRF global network.

Editorial committee

Director: Karen Sadler
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